

Woodstock, had a
huge impact upon the
world



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Woodstock, the Festival of the Flower Children, has had a huge impact upon the world that we live in now. Not only did it cause so much happiness and pain in 1969, but even in today's society, there are no signs of it fading away. The music of that generation began to feel music as a deeper thing; to them, it was wild, and its wildness freed them from cultural restraints, from the everyday strains that are placed on human beings. It took them to a point where people were free to be naked in public, to talk about having sex, to smoke grass openly with friends, drop acid, have long hair, dress anyway they chose, to experiment and explore life freely. The bands that were scheduled to play at Woodstock and the bands that actually played at the Festival were different. There were some minor changes, but changes were done none the least.

For example: The Jeff Beck Group were canceled from the Festival; Iron Butterfly failed to appear; and It's a Beautiful Day was rejected (Woodstock.com). But some of the more noteworthy bands that did play were: Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, Richie Havens, Janis Joplin, Santana, Sweetwater, and The Who. Originally, the performances were scheduled to go from seven o'clock till about midnight the first night of the concert. But later, as everyone seemed to realize, that the people in the crowds weren't going to go to sleep after all that, no way.

So the Festival coordinators started running around asking all the bands that already played if they can go back on for a second set. Some of the bands were happy to do so, but others were concerned. They worried because they heard that Woodstock turned into a "free festival" and that the promoters were going to lose their shirts, which both facts were true. So some of the

bands started coming up to the business managers demanding cash before they pay, but there was honestly no way to do that in hell. So their main banker, Charlie Prince, got teller's checks from the bank that they were doing business in, and the bands got their money.

Another way they burned up time was that the promoters got different people up on stage to do different things. One example, Tom Law, stated: "A number of times, Wavy would ask me to lead everyone in yoga from the stage. I would come over and fill in for 15-20 minutes.

I would say that this is another way to get high, no drugs. I would tell them to sit in a lotus pose, take deep breaths and exhale every breath. They were just doing things together. It was phenomenal, because it isn't everyday that people do things together like that." (Makower, 14-17).

The people that attended the Woodstock Arts and Festival in 1969 were affected in hundreds of different ways. Not only did they have their own "mind-expanding" drugs and the side effects from that, but they also had to worry about their stay at the concert; where would they sleep, bath, and what would they eat. For the people that actually had affiliation with the Festival itself, the stay wasn't all that bad. The commission rented out basically whole hotels, the artists had helicopter rides to and from as they pleased, and lots of food too. The Red Top was a favorite place, there was a pool at that hotel, although it was drained.

But every night you could hear and see people having sex in there. An unfortunate thing happened to that hotel, however, the night before the festival, someone set the hotel on fire (Makower, 85-86). For the common

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folk life wasn't so easy. First off, the area, which was surrounded by swamps and poison ivy, got lots of people rashes and sort of sick.

It was possibly Bob Dylan's doctors who at first helped everyone, and then the Hog Farmers helped in immensely. The Hog Farmers were vital for setting the right tone for the festival. They were the unofficial security force- The Please Force- and Wavy Gravy was the Chief of Please. They wore orange armbands showing a hog sitting on the neck of a guitar, they ran the free-food kitchens, organized camping grounds, and also oversaw cleanup. Without them, the concert could have seen a terrible downfall (Casale, 7-10). Already food was scarce. The hot dog stands were running low-later, they would burn down-and even in nearby towns like Ellenville, stores were running and selling out of food fast. There were no real " sleeping areas", people just went to sleep where ever they lay down.

There were community announcements made about water, people who lost other people, about bad drugs-as well as cheery poetry readings. In the casualty department, there were two reported deaths, but there were also two births. The other major problem was the rain. It rained terribly.

The mountains of garbage became soaked in mud. All of it looked like " thick globs of chocolate pudding", the only way to really get around was to go into the mud. It almost instantly went from incredibly hot to incredibly wet. People just went along there everyday affairs, some people even took off all their cloths as a whole and started throwing frisbees and just playing around(Spitz, 345-346). Local businesses and the townsfolk to say the least

weren't at all to happy with the Woodstock Festival. A major blow came in July, only one month before the concert.

The Wallkill town board (original site) suddenly withdrew the permission to hold the concert, now they were without a place to hold it. But they finally found a place, the owner of the land was Max Yasgur, a well respected older man that owned dairy farms in the area, they leased the land for \$50, 000, but they also had to move all the equipment 50 miles from Wallkill to Bethel, which costs the executives about \$300, 000 total. But this area wasn't all to happy about it either. The local citizens were tired of the hippies that trooped into Woodstock. Peace and quiet were more important than money and fame (Landy, 55). Most stores in the neighboring towns were shut down and/or sold out.

There wasn't really all too much violence present, but trespassing was the major problem that faced the local residents. Even though the concert goers trespassed all the time, they rarely took anything or destroyed any property. The local authority wasn't at all prepared for the challenges that faced them with the coming of this concert. On Thursday, a day before the start of the festival, over 300 New York City cops abandoned the concert after a warning by Police Commissioner Patrick Leary that their work as Woodstock Security Guards violated the departments regulations against moonlighting. But even after that threat, some officers still stayed (Casale, 7).

First they had to worry about the roads, it was the first time in our nations history that any group of people have closed down a major highway to the

point that no one could get through. By the time the music started Friday afternoon, cars were no longer allowed to enter the area, and also New York State Police had transferred 150 officers to help deal with traffic. They also faced the problem of what to do with all the drugs that was inevitably present. All together, the officers had given up on the pursuit of placing drug charges and arrests. The local police seemed quite friendly, it wasn't unusual to see 5-6 people sitting atop a police car that drove slowly toward the concert ground. But there were some minor set backs at the concert with the authorities.

The site was declared a disaster area. It all started out with Rockefeller's people, then with the governors's people, they were all freaking out and wanting to send in the National Guard and to remove everyone. They were saying that the Festival was a danger to the community and a danger to the public's health. But at the end of it all, they were more than happy to help out in anyway that they could, weather it was to send in medical teams, to set up flied hospitals, or to send in food (Makower, 57-58). The Woodstock Arts and Music Festival was a major event that happened in our nations history. Many say that it will never be duplicated to its fullest meaning, and they are probably right. And at one point, they wanted to take it away from us and not let us have it. But what was left was that the concert left us was a feeling of hope, a feeling of unity.

And that, no one can take away from us, no matter how hard they try.

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